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Accomplishments
OF THE
1947 General Assembly
OF
South Carolina

STATEWIDE RADIO ADDRESS OF

J. STROM THURMOND
GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA

JUNE 4, 1947

MAY 18 1992

STATE DOCUMENTS

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 1947 GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

I. INTRODUCTION

My Fellow South Carolinians:

Knowing that you, my friends, are vitally interested in good government in South Carolina, I feel compelled to review with you tonight the accomplishments of your General Assembly at the 1947 session, which ended its deliberations on May 14. Especially do I wish to appraise the work of the Legislature in the light of my Inaugural Address as Governor last January.

In that address I stated "no generation of our people ever faced greater opportunities and more solemn responsibilities". A broad and comprehensive program was outlined to the General Assembly. It was designed to enable our State and our people to meet these responsibilities and take full advantage of our opportunities in this postwar period.

The program I submitted to the General Assembly was not a one-year program. It was a four-year program. It represented weeks and months of study by me on the affairs of government in South Carolina and set forth the objectives of my administration as Governor. I expected that it would command the respect and immediate attention of the General Assembly. Tonight I am happy to report to you that real progress has been made, and much more was accomplished toward carrying out this program than is generally realized. There remains much to be done, but great strides have been made toward attaining more efficient government in our State—not only in administration, but in those things which will improve the social and economic structure of our State, and assure a higher standard of living for our people.

II. LEGISLATION ACCOMPLISHED

Among the measures which I recommended to the General Assembly in my Inaugural Address, the following 27 were carried out by legislative enactment:

1. Imposition of a graduated liquor tax, to channel the excessive profits of the liquor industry into the State Treasury.

2. Allotment of a major part of the State surplus to a \$10,260,000 capital improvement and construction program at our institutions of higher learning and other State institutions.

3. Adoption of the best teachers' salary schedule in the history of South Carolina.

4. Creation of a State system of Area Trade Schools.

5. Provision for a survey and study of the State School System in reference to administration and curricula.

6. Reorganization of the State Department of Education to fix responsibility more definitely, to promote efficiency, and to provide more and better service to education.

7. Re-establishment of a State Supervisor of School House Planning in the Department of Education.

8. Establishment by permanent law of a State supported nine months school term.

9. Amendment of State Textbook law so that the State Board of Education may extend existing contracts.

10. Increase of appropriations for State Parks.
11. Enlargement of appropriations for such educational activities as libraries, vocational education, Negro education, adult education, and transportation of school pupils.
12. Exemption of household goods and furniture from taxes when used in the owner's home.
13. State payment of salaries of county superintendents of education.
14. More adequate financial support of our State institutions of higher learning.
15. Creation of a temporary agency to handle war surplus property acquisition for the State, Counties, Cities, Districts, and charitable and non-profit organizations.
16. Transfer from State Highway Department to Governor's office of the State Identification Bureau, preliminary to setting up a State Bureau of Investigation.
17. Passage of resolution memorializing the Congress of the United States to complete construction of the Clark's Hill power, navigation, flood control and recreation project on the Savannah River by the Army Engineers.

18. Broadening of Public Welfare program of the State, including increased support for the aged, dependent children, and physically and mentally handicapped people.

19. Establishment of standards for hospitals and provision for their inspection.

20. More adequate hospital facilities for the general public, including the new half million dollar cancer clinic to be set up.

21. Continued support of the development of South Carolina ports, ocean commerce, and industrial expansion.

22. Inclusion of all appropriations in the State Appropriation Bill, to disclose to the taxpayers how our money is spent.

23. Measures to end dual office holding in violation of the Constitution of the State.

24. Legislation to decrease drunken driving on our highways.

25. Provision for education of the children of deceased or disabled veterans of World War II.

26. Appointment of a committee to study assessment of property for purposes of taxation.

27. Appointment of a committee to solicit Federal support in promoting export and sales of South Carolina flue cured tobacco.

In making this report to you on the accomplishments of the General Assembly, I desire to call to your special attention several of the enactments which I consider of vital importance to our State.

Liquor.—The first of these is the new tax on wholesale and retail liquor dealers. When the Legislature carried out my recommendation that a graduated liquor tax based upon the amount of sales be enacted, we took a long step forward in breaking the back of the liquor ring in South Carolina. The effect of this tax will be to cut down drastically the enormous income which liquor dealers have been making, and it will channel their excessive profits into the State Treasury. In doing this we have kept our promise to the people of South Carolina last summer that we would exert every effort to smash the liquor ring and make it impotent to dominate our political life, threaten popular government, and dictate who should be elected to public office, both statewide and local. The liquor people, through their recognized spokesmen, have predicted that this law would increase bootlegging. They have thus sought to weaken the law in public estimation. There have also

been veiled suggestions that the liquor tax would be evaded. I want to say here and now, so all may be fully warned, that the full force and power of our law enforcement agencies will be vigorously employed to carry out this law. If there is any evasion or under the table dealing in liquor in South Carolina, some people are going to serve time in the penitentiary, and they may as well know it now. As long as I am Governor, no person, no group, nor clique will be above the law in South Carolina. I hope that the 1948 session of the General Assembly will carry out my other recommendations with reference to the control of alcoholic beverages so that we may complete the job of cleaning up the liquor mess in South Carolina.

Building Program at State Institutions.—It was my view that the State surplus should be allotted to a capital improvement and construction program at our institutions of higher learning and other State institutions, and I so recommended to the General Assembly. This recommendation was carried out by the enactment of a bill making provision for such a construction program entailing the appropriation of \$10,260,000. This bill is now before me for considera-

tion. I am making careful inquiry into all phases of the program before acting finally on this important legislation. In recommending this program, I pointed out that the bulk of the allotments should be held in reserve until construction costs and equipment were more favorable to the State. The bill contains certain restrictions on the spending of this money which show that the Legislature agrees with me that caution should be exercised to the end that full value for every dollar spent will be guaranteed to our people. Construction costs are still too high, and now is not the time to let any construction contracts. Moreover, it will be most helpful to the carrying out of the program to know more definitely just what Federal aid and other support may be secured for the various institutions involved. It will be some time before we will know just what the present Congress will do about Federal aid, and no harm will result to the State, or to any project, by waiting awhile and knowing just where we stand before embarking on this program. I intend to carefully consider each item in this Bill and to evaluate our financial status before taking action. Careful and prudent handling is necessary to assure

the maximum benefits from the disposition of this surplus, and, from the response received, I am sure the people approve the course I am following.

Teachers' Salaries.—In my Inaugural Address, I stressed the crisis in education which our State was facing because of the shortage of teachers and the increasing numbers of our college graduates who have been turning their backs on teaching as a profession. To meet this crisis I recommended that teachers' salaries be materially increased, and a bill was passed by the General Assembly and signed by me making provision for the best teachers' salary schedule ever established in this State.

Area Trade Schools.—Certainly one of the most vital and constructive measures enacted during the session was that creating the Area Trade Schools, which I urged at the beginning of the session. We are now following up this Act by handling actively with the War Assets Administration the matter of obtaining sites for these schools, and also the donation to the State of the machine tools with which to equip them. Through these schools, we shall afford training in trades and mechanical skills, converting com-

mon labor to skilled labor. We shall thus better equip our State for the era of industrial expansion for which we are striving, and greatly improve our economic status as a State by assuring a higher per capita income, not only for urban workers but also for those who live on the farm as well.

Dual Office Holding.—Our State government has long suffered from the undue concentration of power and influence possessed by certain individuals who acquired two or more public offices. The Constitution intended to prevent the baneful results of this practice by provisions against dual office holding, but all of us know that this practice has been prevalent. At the session just closed, the greater part of the dual office holding involving members of the General Assembly was ended through executive efforts and legislative action cooperating to attain the desired result. There are still several instances which appear to be violations of the State Constitution, and if they are not soon rectified, I shall be at liberty to employ the executive power to end them.

Taxation and Fiscal Affairs.—In the field of taxation and fiscal affairs, we have made gratify-

ing progress in putting our governmental house in order. The General Assembly made a distinct contribution to sound financial administration by including in the State Appropriation Bill the sum total of all expenditures of the State government, whether the appropriation originated this year or was enacted in previous years. This informed the taxpayers that, instead of the \$28,000,000 which many were led to believe their government cost them, the actual cost is in the neighborhood of \$95,000,000. This action constituted the first step toward eliminating the evil of ear-marking income of the State for specific purposes. Unification of the State Budget is indispensable to a public knowledge of the State's affairs and to the proper regulation, control and audit of State expenditures. Those who foot the bills for government have a right to know how their money is spent. The ending of this fiscal "shell game", which concealed total appropriations for State agencies, is an important accomplishment and a definite step toward the sound and businesslike administration we want for our State government. The inner workings of the various State agencies and departments should also be better and more simply revealed

to the public. Our goal is a State Appropriation Bill which will make crystal clear the specific purposes for which all public funds are expended. I intend to do all in my power each year, as a member of the State Budget Commission, to see that this goal shall be accomplished and the people given a sound financial policy, and full information as to the spending of their money.

III. LEGISLATION PENDING

The things which I have referred to thus far have been accomplished already in carrying out the comprehensive program proposed by me to the General Assembly last January. To complete the picture of the 1947 session, I wish now to give the status of some of the other recommendations in my Inaugural Address on which final action was not taken. There are two very important measures which have already passed the House of Representatives and are now pending in the Senate for action at the next session:

Reorganization of State Government.—One provides for a reorganization of the State government. If we are going to have efficient government in South Carolina, we must overhaul and

streamline the State governmental machinery. The overlapping, duplicating and uncoordinated agencies, bureaus, and departments, must be combined, consolidated, and in many instances abolished, in order to make government a workable instrument of public service. Efficiency in operation and a saving of the taxpayer's money demand that we take action. This was the first proposal made in my Inaugural Address. I regard it as one of the most important recommendations made by me, and now the greatest single need of our State. Legislation with teeth and power sufficient to carry out a reorganization was passed by the House and is now pending in the Senate. I believe we can confidently expect enactment of this measure at the 1948 session.

State Bureau of Investigation.—The other measure to which I refer is the establishment of a State Bureau of Investigation to replace the present State Constabulary. Already, I have demonstrated my intense interest in rigid law enforcement. We must bring to the bar of justice those who violate our laws, and once they are convicted there should be no short cuts to freedom. While I am Governor, there will be none.

We are now bringing back to the penitentiary those who have been free under so called leaves of absence. The verdicts of the courts must and will be upheld. To assure our people full protection of the law, we need increasingly more trained and skilled law enforcement personnel. We must keep pace in this vital field, and for this reason I hope that the next session of the Legislature will set up in South Carolina the S. B. I., as I have recommended.

Other Bills Introduced.—The following 18 other bills of importance, carrying out recommendations in my Inaugural Address, were introduced at the past session and are now pending in the General Assembly:

1. Revision and clarification of our State Constitution so as to make that instrument meet the needs of our great State in the year 1947 and the future.

2. Amendment of the Constitution to remove the power of clemency from the Governor except in capital cases.

3. Coordination of the total program of education at our colleges. This is important legislation and will help to eliminate wasteful duplications and overlapping of services and effect

a more unified program of higher education, as well as eliminate competition for students, buildings and legislative appropriations.

4. Establishment of a merit personnel system for the State government so as to make public service depend on honesty, ability, energy, courtesy and courage—rather than political influence and geographical location.

5. Reorganization of the State Board of Health in such manner as to give adequate representation to the public generally on this important State agency.

6. Certification of child labor for certain industries.

7. Regulation of the employment of children.

8. A maximum hour and minimum wage scale for employees of certain industrial plants in which such is obviously needed.

9. Provision for textile and other plants to furnish equipment that will maintain temperature and humidity conducive to the health of employees.

10. Inspection of school buses, examination of bus drivers and regulation of the type of vehicle to be used for buses in which school children are transported.

11. Amendment of the Constitution to remove the poll tax as a voting prerequisite.

12. A secret type or Australian ballot in general elections.

13. Legalization of the use of voting machines in general elections.

14. Appointment of a committee to study and make recommendations for legislation regarding the payment of a bonus to veterans of World War II. If this cannot be done on a cash basis, it may be made payable in the form of a credit, from time to time, against any taxes due by them, State, County or Municipal, or in some other way.

15. Establishment of a central purchasing agency for the State Government and its institutions.

16. An "Occupational Disease" law as an amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Law.

17. Regulation of child placing.

18. Modernization and strengthening of child adoption laws.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHICH NO ACTION TAKEN

Time will not permit reference to all recommendations in my Inaugural Address, but 11 of them on which no action was taken are especially called to your attention:

1. A proper system of county government. This omission in our Constitution must be corrected in order to end the ridiculous existing condition under which the City of Columbia is in reality the county seat of every county in the State, because the local affairs of each county are actually handled by the General Assembly there.

2. Local option for counties and municipalities on the liquor question.

3. Stricter regulatory provisions for controlling liquor.

4. Creation of an Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to better regulate the liquor business.

5. Fire safety measures to prevent hotel disasters.

6. Reorganization of the Aeronautics Commission.

7. Regulation of the hours of labor of women in mercantile and service establishments.

8. Clarification of jurisdiction of the several courts as to children.

9. A comprehensive program for reforestation.

10. Adequate protection for our fish and game.

11. Exemption of veterans from payment of business licenses for a period of five years.

V. CONCLUSION

From this report, I feel certain it is obvious to you that the 87th General Assembly thus far has accomplished much. What it has done will be of real benefit to the State and our people in the months and years ahead. Yet, I am likewise sure you realize, and the members of the General Assembly realize, that much remains to be done before the program we have entered upon is completed.

What we are seeking to accomplish for the betterment of South Carolina is not the task of the Governor and the Legislature alone. You, as a citizen and a taxpayer, have a responsibility and duty to perform. After all we are your elected representatives.

No program and no government is better and stronger than the people who support it. In-

difference to home breeds juvenile delinquency and bad citizenship. Indifference to government breeds mediocre or even bad government. A God-fearing, honest, and alert citizenship results in good government.

Too often that which is everybody's business is nobody's business. I appeal to you tonight to interest yourself in the program I have presented for a more progressive South Carolina. If it appeals to you, as I am sure it does, then take the time to let your Senators and Representatives know your views. Let them know you are behind this program to restore character, honesty, efficiency and progressiveness in the government of South Carolina.

When this is done, I promise you that the State you and I love so much will again attain the high position in the sisterhood of States that South Carolina held when it was one of the thirteen original colonies. We want our people today, as well as generations yet unborn, to reap the benefits of good government which we are striving so hard to bring to you.

I wish to thank you and good night.